

1999 LIVESTOCK REVIEW

SUMMARY - Colorado farmers and ranchers had 3.15 million head of all cattle and calves on hand as of January 1, 2000, down 2 percent from one year earlier. The number of sheep and lambs was unchanged, at 440,000 head. The December 1, 1999 inventory of all hogs and pigs increased 5 percent from a year to 910,000 head. The December 1, 1999 inventory of all chickens was down 3 percent to 4.48 million birds. Colorado ranks 10th in the number of all cattle and calves, 4th in the number of all sheep and lambs, 14th in the number of all hogs and pigs, and 26th in the number of all chickens. The state also ranks as the 4th largest cattle feeder with marketings of more than two million head of fed cattle annually in each of the past 18 years. Colorado ranks 3rd in the number of market sheep and lambs. More than one million head of sheep and lambs have been slaughtered in the state in each of the last 20 years, making Colorado the Nation's largest producer of lamb.

The state's dairy cow numbers have remained fairly constant in recent years, with an annual average number of milk cows fluctuating between 77 and 84 thousand head. However, during the 1990's the number of operations has declined sharply while the average herd size has increased. Disease and other problems within the bee industry during the last few years reduced the number of colonies and honey production to record or near record lows. The state's trout producers have sold more than \$2 million of fish of various sizes each year since estimates were begun in 1989.

The total inventory value of the cattle, sheep, hogs, and chickens on hand at the beginning of the year (using the January 1 and December 1 reference dates) was \$2.36 billion, up 21 percent from the comparable value of \$1.95 billion one year earlier. The value per head was well above the previous year for cattle and hogs, slightly lower for sheep and lambs, and slightly higher for all chickens.

Pasture and range feed conditions were rated mostly good to fair throughout the early part of the season. Late April rains extended into May, stimulating forage growth as warmer summer temperatures arrived in mid June. Overall pasture and range feed condition ratings were mostly good to excellent from mid June through the middle of September. Condition ratings then dropped to mostly good and remained at that level for the remainder of the season. Late season moisture was limited, but forage supplies were still plentiful for late season grazing. A very mild winter enabled full use of crop residues for grazing and helped keep supplemental feed requirements at low levels.

CATTLE AND CALVES - The January 1, 2000 inventory of all cattle and calves declined 2 percent from a year earlier to 3.15 million head. The number of cattle and calves in

feedlots being fed for the slaughter market increased 3 percent to 1.2 million head and accounted for 38.1 percent of the state's total inventory. During 1999, there were 280 feedlots of all sizes in operation in Colorado. Those feedlots marketed 2.64 million head of fed cattle for the slaughter market compared with 2.56 million marketed from 280 feedlots one year earlier. The 24 largest feedlots marketed 73 percent of the annual total in 1999. The number of beef cows, at 837,000 head, was unchanged from the previous year and the number of milk cows was also unchanged at 83,000 head on hand at the beginning of 2000.

There were 930,000 heifers 500 pounds and over on hand at the beginning of 2000, up 2 percent from the previous year. Of that total, 150,000 were being kept for beef cow replacement (up 3 percent) and 40,000 head were being kept for milk cow replacement (down 11 percent). The remaining 740,000 were other heifers (up 3 percent) of which 520,000 were being fed for the slaughter market in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. The January 1, 2000 inventory also included 990,000 head of steers weighing 500 pounds or more (down 5 percent) of which 650,000 were in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. Of the 1,200,000 head of cattle on feed, 1,180,000 head were in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. The number of bulls weighing 500 pounds or more was unchanged from the previous year at 50,000 head. The number of calves (steers, heifers, and bulls weighing under 500 pounds), at 260,000 head, was down 7 percent from the previous year. The 1999 calf crop in Colorado totaled 870,000 head, unchanged from the number of calves born in 1998.

Milk production during 1999, at 1.73 billion pounds, was up 2 percent from the previous year to a new record high. The annual average number of milk cows on hand was unchanged from a year earlier at 83,000. However, producers obtained a new record high average production of 20,819 pounds per cow in 1999. This average was exceeded by only two other states.

The total inventory value of all cattle and calves in Colorado as of January 1, 2000 was \$2.24 billion, 21 percent above the \$1.86 billion for January 1, 1999 as a 22 percent increase in the average value per head more than offset the smaller inventory. The average value of \$710 per head represented an increase of \$130 per head from the previous year. The number of operations with cattle at any time during 1999, at 15,000, was down 3 percent from the previous year. Just over 7 percent of the cattle operations accounted for 69 percent of the total inventory. The number of beef cow operations was down 4 percent from the previous year to 11,200 while the number of milk cow operations was unchanged at 900 for 1999.

SHEEP AND LAMBS - The January 1, 2000 inventory of all sheep and lambs in Colorado was 440,000 head, unchanged from a year earlier. The total breeding sheep and lamb inventory as of January 1, 2000 was down 5 percent to 210,000 while the number of market sheep and lambs increased 5 percent to 230,000 head. The number of ewes one year old and older, at 175,000, was down 5 percent from January 1, 1999; rams one year old and older, at 6,000 head, were unchanged; and replacement lambs less than one year of age were also unchanged at 29,000 head. The 1999 lamb crop of 210,000 head was down 5 percent from the number born in 1998.

On January 1, 2000, the 230,000 head of market sheep and lambs consisted of 1,000 sheep and 229,000 lambs. The 229,000 head of market lambs were estimated to be in the following weight groups: 4,000 head weighing less than 65 pounds, 6,000 head in the 65 through 84 pound category, 47,000 head in the 85 through 105 pound category, and 172,000 head weighing more than 105 pounds.

The January 1, 2000 inventory value of all sheep and lambs in Colorado was estimated at \$39.16 million, down 4 percent from a year earlier. While the inventory was unchanged, the mix between breeding and market stock and the associated inventory values per head resulted in the lower inventory value. The number of operations in the state with sheep was 1,500 for 1999, down from 1,700 operations a year earlier.

HOGS AND PIGS - The December 1, 1999 inventory of all hogs and pigs in Colorado was 910,000 head. This was a 5 percent increase over the December 1, 1998 level and a new record high level for the state. This is the fourteenth consecutive year in which inventory numbers have been unchanged or higher than the previous year. The December 1, 1986 inventory number of 190,000 head of all hogs and pigs was the lowest since 1965 when 169,000 head were on hand as of December 1 of that year.

The December 1, 1999 breeding hog inventory increased 17 percent from a year earlier to a record high 210,000 head. The market hog inventory of 700,000 head increased 1 percent, also a new record high for the state. The state's total pig crop for 1999 totaled 2.80 million head, up 14 percent from the 1998 pig crop of 2.45 million head. The 332,000 sows farrowed during 1999 increased 16 percent from the 286,000 sows farrowed in the previous year. Producers averaged 8.4 pigs weaned per litter for the year compared with 8.6 pigs per litter in 1998.

The December 1, 1999 inventory value of all hogs and pigs was placed at \$70.98 million, 70 percent higher than a year earlier. The average value, at \$78.00 per head, increased \$30.00 per head from the previous year which complimented the larger inventory. The number of operations with hogs

during 1999 dropped by half from a year earlier to just 500. As with numerous other states, the number of hogs and pigs are being concentrated in fewer, but larger, operations.

CHICKENS AND EGGS - The all chicken inventory in Colorado as of December 1, 1999 totaled just under 4.5 million birds, down 3 percent from the 4.6 million on hand one year earlier. The total number of layers increased 2 percent to 3.80 million. Of that total, 1.05 million were one year old and older (down 53 percent) and 2.75 million were less than one year of age (up 85 percent). The total inventory also included 210,000 pullets 13 to 20 weeks of age and 300,000 pullets less than 13 weeks of age. The remaining inventory of 169,000 other chickens represented an increase of 30 percent from the previous year.

During the period from December 1, 1998 through November 30, 1999, the state's laying flocks produced 921 million eggs, down 3 percent from the previous year. The annual average number of layers declined 3 percent to 3.54 million while the average number of eggs per layer, at 260, was up from 258 the previous year.

The total inventory value of all chickens was \$12.09 million, up 10 percent from a year earlier as a higher average value per bird more than offset the 3 percent decline in the total inventory. The average value per bird was \$2.70, up 30 cents from the December 1, 1998 average.

BEEES AND HONEY - Honey production in Colorado during 1999 totaled 2.05 million pounds, up 6 percent from 1998. The number of colonies was unchanged from the previous year at 27,000. However, the yield per colony increased from 72 pounds in 1998 to 76 pounds in 1999. The 1999 honey crop was valued at just under \$1.40 million, up 2 percent from 1998. Producers received an average of 68 cents per pound for honey sold in 1999, down 2 cents from a year earlier. Producer stocks of honey on hand as of December 15, 1999 totaled just over 1.4 million pounds, 10 percent under the December 15, 1998 stocks.

TROUT - There were 45 operations in Colorado during 1999 from which the value of trout sales and the value of distributed trout totaled \$7.27 million. Prior to 1999, trout estimates did not include the value of distributed trout. Producers marketed and/or distributed 2.48 million pounds of foodsize, stocker, and fingerling fish during 1999 and received an average price of \$2.93 per pound. The value of foodsize fish totaled \$2.05 million,. Producers received an average price of \$2.59 per pound for foodsize trout. The value of stockers totaled \$3.78 million. The average price received for stockers was \$2.66. The value of fingerlings totaled \$1.44 million, with 96 percent represented by distributed fingerlings. Producers received an average price of \$141.00 per 1,000 fish for fingerlings.